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AUTHOR Chew, Charles R.
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ABSTRACT

Resulting from a summer workshop concentrating on the writing of elementary school children, this booklet begins by reviewing a number of articles read and discussed by workshop participants. The second section, drawing upon the work of Sheila Schlawin, focuses on the composing process and answers a number of questions that teachers have about types of writing, writing quality and quantity, and organizing, drafting, revising, and editing material. Practical suggestions are included to aid the classroom teacher. The third section answers questions raised by workshop participants on such subjects as student writing anxiety, writing across the curriculum, and developmental programs in writing. Case studies of student papers with suggestions for instruction are then followed by lesson plans devised by participants. The booklet concludes with two questionnaires used by participants to review textbooks and a sample evaluation of a current textbook series. (HOD)

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FOCUS ON THE YOUNG WRITER

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Charles R. Chew
Chief
Bureau of English & Reading Education
New York State Education Department

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Dutchess County BOCES

Poughkeepsie, New York

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Ken Kahn and the Dutchess County BOCES deserve recognition for the support given over the past five summers in the effort to improve writing instruction. Much preparation and work preceded each summer session, but we in the Bureau have been pleased to witness the development of an expertise related to writing instruction within the BOCES area. In addition, we have gained a number of friendships which will be valued over the years.

FOCUS ON THE YOUNG WRITER

TABLE OF CONTENTS PAGE

WRITINGS ABOUT WRITINGS--WHAT IS TO BE LEARNED.....1

THE COMPOSING PROCESS.....16

QUESTIONS FROM THE PARTICIPANTS.....25

CASE STUDIES OF STUDENT PAPERS.....37

LESSON PLANS.....53

TEXT MATERIALS.....95

SUMMER CURRICULUM - WRITING - JULY 1983

Participants

Harriet Ackerman
Pine Plains

Janet Bertomen
Webutuck

Barbara Castello
Millbrook

Gertrude Collyer
Millbrook

Barbara Dolan
Arlington

R. Eklund
Millbrook

Ruth Hart
Spackenkill

Robert Holland
Dover

Karen Jaquith
Webutuck

Roy Lane
Beacon

Cynthia Mahlan
Dover

Michael Makar
Millbrook

Marie Rausch
Millbrook

Darlene Resling
Beacon

June Schevon
Pine Plains

Martha Shaw
Beacon

Patricia M. Sherman
Red Hook

Rita Sturgis
Pawling

Elizabeth A. Tanner
Pawling

Bernard Weaver, Jr.
Pine Plains

Donna Spola
Beacon

Introduction

For the past four summers, Bureau of English Education staff members have offered an intensive workshop to classroom teachers and administrators served by the Dutchess County Board of Cooperative Educational Services. The publication of a manual to share the work of the participants and workshop leaders followed the work done during those summer days. The present publication, Focus on the Young Writer, resulted from the fifth summer workshop held in July 1982 which focused for the most part on the young writer - the elementary student.

Several reasons account for this focus: (1) Past workshops focused on the secondary and later elementary writer, and (2) Interest in the elementary student as writer intensified this year in our state because of the forthcoming writing assessment of fifth grade students.

The workshops have always been sessions which involved participants and workshop leaders. Participants always produce products whether these products were personal writing, comments on students' writing, or proposed lesson plans. The publication produced at the end of the workshop always includes abundant samples of participants' contributions.

Each day, participants and workshop leaders began the sessions by writing. Much evidence exists to suggest the value of journal writing. Support can also be found which indicates that the teacher, if she or he is to teach the composing process, must also write. In this writing experience, each of us gained a little more insight into what the writing process involves and what journal or free writing can mean for writing instruction. A discussion of this experience, although not recorded in this publication, gave each an opportunity to share his or her experience, to discuss instructional implications, and to experience aspects of the composing process.

In planning the workshop sessions there is always the tendency to overplan, to imagine that more can be accomplished than actually will be. As a result, activities for the writing process received little or no attention during the workshop week. Readers should refer to the four previous workshop publications for activity suggestions. These publications are Write? Right!, Teaching Writing Right, Writing Across the Curriculum K-12, Teaching Writing: Research & Strategies.

This publication includes:

Writings About Writings - What Is To Be Learned - This section reviews a number of articles read and discussed by workshop participants. Much of the summary material included in this section has been taken directly from the original articles.

The Composing Process - This section focuses on a discussion of the composing process which has been taken from the work of Sheila Schlawin. Not only does this discussion focus on the process but answers a number of questions that teachers may have about types of writing, quality and quantity, organizing, drafting, revising, and editing. Practical suggestions are included to aid the classroom practitioner.

Questions From the Participants - A series of questions raised by participants are answered within this section. Here again, what is written is not to be taken as absolute. As more is learned about the young writer, answers to questions may change as may the questions.

Case Studies of Student Papers - Student papers, comments related to the papers, and suggestions for instruction presented in this section resulted from the work of participants on the fourth day of the workshop. Although limited in the number of papers analyzed, readers should gain some insight as to how such an approach can be helpful to the classroom teacher.

Lesson Plans - Participants devised lesson plans which were submitted at the conclusion of the workshop. These are presented with little or no changes from the original. They are not meant to be a comprehensive writing program but only represent a teacher's sharing of a lesson which involved his or her classroom. Unfortunately not all lessons were signed, and I was unable to give writers credit.

Text Materials - In many classrooms, text materials are the writing program. This section contains two questionnaires used by participants to review textbooks presently used in their classrooms. In addition, a summary of findings is produced to raise the reader's awareness of what may or may not be found in textbooks currently used in classrooms.

Workshop - Dutchess County BOCES
July 12-16, 1982

Agenda

Monday

Introductions

Journal Writing

Workshop - Overview

Questions to be Answered

The Writing Process

What the Experts Say

Activities for the Writing Process

Assignment: Prepare one complete lesson plan to focus on any aspect of the writing process - Due Friday

Tuesday

Journal Writing

Review of Texts

The Elementary Writer - Skills to be Taught

Wednesday

Journal Writing

A Writing Test at Grade 5

Evaluation of Writing Samples

Consultant - Presentation

Thursday

Journal Writing

The Case Study of a Writer's Product

Consultant - Presentation

Friday

Journal Writing

Discussion of the Journal

Sharing of Lesson Plans

Wrap-up

Writings About Writings--What is to be Learned

Writings About Writing: What Is to Be Learned

Writings about writing and how to teach writing have continued to multiply in the last five years. Even those professionals involved in research may have a difficult time keeping up with the proliferation of information about this new area of concern, writing. Yet for classroom instruction to be sound and current, consideration must be given to recent materials. Part of the workshop attempted to meet the need that teachers have to be conversant with research and professional literature related to this topic.

One method which I have found effective in meeting this need is to spend some time reading and discussing relevant literature as a workshop activity. The procedure followed is to divide the large group into smaller groups of three to five people. Give each member of one small group a copy of a piece that you want them to read. Each group gets a different piece of literature. Group members spend some time reading the assignment, discussing it, and suggesting instructional implications if there are any. A variation would be for each group member to receive a different article, report it to the group, and then the group selects one to "report-out" to the large group.

An activity such as this focuses the attention of participants on material to be read, necessitates discussion of the material, and leads to a consideraton of instructional implications. (This activity has been successfully used in a number of Bureau workshops and is explicated fully in To Teach Writing Right by Charles R. Chew and Sheila A. Schlawin, currently in press.)

The following material highlights the articles read and discussed by the Dutchess County workshop participants.

"The Growth and Development of First Grade Writers" by Donald Graves. Paper presented at the Canadian Council of Teachers of English Conference on May 10, 1979.

Summary

Children have a natural urge to express, to make marks, to play with writing, to experiment boldly with new ways to put messages on paper. The young child has no more difficulty in choosing topics for composing than in choosing topics for play. If children are given many opportunities to write, they gradually pass through the phase of topic choice difficulty.

For the six year old child, there is a stage when long delays indicate a part of advancement or moving forward as a writer. The writing may become more difficult as the voice of the audience and writer is heard. Eventually audience becomes a part of the writing process, and the young writer becomes more secure in defending his/her content to others.

Drawing becomes a rehearsal and an idea bank for the writer. Drawing helps the writer to change from speech to print and creates a setting for the writing. Content in drawing often exceeds content in the writing of the young child. Some young writers draw after writing in order to illustrate the writing.

When children first write, they have more concern with the ingredients of the message, not necessarily the placement of the words. They speak as they write. It is difficult for them in this linear process of putting one word in front of others as thinking, sounding, and writing are occuring at the same time.

"KDS CN RIT SUNR ThN We THINGK" by Susan Sowers at Writing Process Laboratory, University of New Hampshire.

Summary

This article focuses on first grade children.

Parents do not worry about errors when a child learns to talk but they may worry about errors in writing. Glenda Bissex says that errors are a piece of informaton rather than something to be erased.

Young writers invent spelling and may, at first, represent the word with only one letter. The letter stands for the first sound. The child later represents the end and then the middle. Invented spelling gives the young writer early power.

Children can tap their own reserves of experience when they write as they do when they talk, draw, and play. Six year olds must also explore their own interests without fear of violating the rules of writing etiquette. We know that published writers place the disciplines of grammar and spelling at the end of the writing process.

Children can learn to write on their own before they read if we can help them develop their abilities. The teacher supports writing with publication and audience. In teacher conferences, the teacher responds to the content of the child's writing. Children read their own books, listen to comments, and discuss the audience response.

"Conveying Meaning in Written Text" by Martha King and Victor Rentel in Language Arts, September 1981.

Summary

A giant step that children must take as they move to writing is to learn to produce discourse without the interaction and support of a conversational partner. The cues they can use as they develop text are not found in what another person says but in previous text and in the ongoing process of constructing a coherent product. Children must discover how to make what is implicitly obvious in the context of the situation explicit in the text. They must learn to use reference, substitution, and other elements of cohesion to make their meanings more explicit and context free.

Unity of meaning that distinguishes text from random sentences is achieved mainly through cohesion -- those integrative elements of text that make it hang together.

Coherence is achieved through:

Reference - This type of cohesion is built into grammar. Usually the reference is to an item in the preceding text, but

occasionally it is to something that follows or is to something outside the text. It can be personal -- she, he --, demonstrative -- this, these --, or comparative --comparative adjectives, quantifiers.

Ellipsis - This type of cohesion is built on the omission of elements of the sentence which require the reader or listener to recall segments of previous texts.

Substitution - This type of cohesion has an item which is used to stand for a removed word, phrase or clause.

Conjunction - This type of cohesion specifies the way in which what is to come is semantically connected to what has gone before -- additive -- and, thus -- adversative -- but, yet, causal -- so, then, -- temporal -- then, therefore.

Children substantially increase their reliance on vocabulary relationships. Development overshadowed any differences observed intitially in children. When given purposeful exposure to relevant oral and written texts, children seemed to have more than adequate intellectual and linguinstic resources to use their current knowledge and social resources to express the most subtle textual distinctions. Direct teaching of these fundamental skills of cohesion did not play a significant role.

"Syllogisms and Superstitions: The Current State of Responding to Writing" by Richard Koch in Language Arts, May 1982.

Summary

To mark an error in student writing is by no means to correct it. Excessive correction simply does not work. If we respond to student writing problems exclusively with isolated pattern practice, we run a high risk of little transfer of training taking place.

One mistake is for the teacher to offer dishonest support -- vague, inaccurate, or unjustified. Offering only support is also a type of dishonesty.

A second mistake occurs when the teacher professes to be interested in a student's writing as communication but actually is not interested in what the student has to say.

To be successful, teacher comments must actually perceive both the student's purpose and the key problem(s) of the piece. The teacher must identify with the writer and the piece and should be able to offer suggestions to overcome problems.

Positive feedback -- What is most striking or memorable?

Identification -- Purpose

Questions -- What questions do you have?

Suggestions -- What suggestions do you have?

Responses can not be rule-centered or even method-centered. Responses must be centered on students who write and what they have written.

"What Children Show Us About Revision" by Donald Graves, Research Update, Language Arts, March 1979.

Summary

When children revise, they show us what is important to them in the writing process. Revision in this study refers to the act of changing something already composed.

For children who invent spellings, words are written and revised in the following categories:

1. Sight words: These words have reached the stage of final, correct spelling. For Sarah such words as "good, she, is, said, and, from" are in this category. The words are known, stable and will be revised if she spots an error in them.

2. Stable inventions: These words are spelled the same way each time even though they are inventions. Such words as "valin - villain," "neis - nice." Since these words have reached a point of stability, differences in these words will be noted and revised.

3. Words in transition: These words are invented, have appeared only several times in the child's writing. When these words appear, the child sounds them through as they are written. An example of this type of word for Sarah is "wuz, wsas" in her earlier writing. The word is now in the sight category. Words in this category are not revised as often as sight words and stable inventions since they are unstable.

4. First inventions: These are new words invented for the first time as in "botafl prnssas" - beautiful princess. Of all the words spelled, these are the least likely to be revised. If these words are revised at all it is during the composing of the word itself.

A child's revision patterns are shaped by a variety of circumstances -- word stability, the newness of a procedure, audience response, and the purpose of writing. For one student the inclusion and exclusion of topics are a process of revision.

Once crossing-out enters the picture for children, the units of revision expand. Once children feel control of the writing process from the choice of topic, selecting the best lead, to the classification of experience through several drafts, the center of control is more in the child's hands than the teacher's.

A child with an experience, the words to recall it, and the reading power to disengage from his own written text can be lead to revise.

Summary of Preliminary Findings on Revision

1. Children revise in other media forms such as block building, drawing and painting before they revise in writing. Children who demonstrate an

overall learning stance toward revision in one area are more likely to demonstrate it in another, such as writing.

2. When children try a new approach to writing, other areas in which they have been competent may suffer temporarily.

3. Beginning writers do not revise. Getting the new step down is enough. (When Sarah introduced a logical construction, she did not revise it even though it did not make sense to her.)

4. Early writing is often impressionistic. Children put words down for a certain feeling. Feelings are revised only if the child senses the feeling is not accurate. (Sarah "sprinkles" in "It is good. I love you." after her work is completed.)

5. Invented spellings go through stages of development along with the child. They fall into different classifications - first inventions, words in transition, stable inventions, sight words. Words that are more stable, as in stable inventions and sight words, are more likely to be revised.

6. Toward the end of the primary years many children reach a point of equilibrium when handwriting and spelling problems are behind them and messages flow easily on to the paper. Children do not revise these messages.

7. Eight year old children find it easier to revise topics about personal experiences than the experiences of others. They find it easier to recall their own experiences than the experiences of others.

8. Revision begins when children choose their own topics. Children who quickly arrive at a number of topics, learn to exclude some topics and write on others, are learning to revise.

9. Children who can quickly list personal topics for writing, and write a series of leads about the same subject, demonstrate a strong capacity for revision.

10. Peer audiences have an effect on children's revision and their use of new approaches to the writing process.

11. Teachers can play a significant role in releasing a child's potential for revision.

12. When children no longer erase, but cross out, draw lines and arrows for new information arrangements, or change their handwriting to a scrawl, they indicate a changed view toward words. Words, for these children are now temporary, malleable, or clay-like. The words can be changed until they evolve toward the right meaning for these children.

13. Children who write rapidly are more likely to revise in larger units and sustain a single composition for a longer period of time than those who write slowly. (Andrea writes at 15 words per minute, does three or four drafts over a three week period, whereas Brian writes at 5-6 words per minute, does two drafts over a one week period.)

"The Researcher Who Watches Children Write" by Susan Sowers, The Writing Process Laboratory, University of New Hampshire

Summary

This article focuses on Dr. Donald Graves as a researcher who observes children involved in the writing process.

Chris is the child reported on and is a student who does things for the doing. These things are ends in themselves, not necessarily for use at other times. Chris writes for the moment. An audience in time and space is not yet important to Chris. Each influence on Chris' writing is a variable.

Dr. Graves believes it is presumptuous to make statements about how children develop without actual observation of children.

What did Graves learn from the study? He believes that the observer can get a sense of sequences in which children learn to write, to see how much a child's development influences the writing process, to try to find out new components to the writing process, and to come up with new questions to ask.

"Make It Messy To Make It Clear" by Lucy McCormick Calkins, Writing Process Laboratory, University of New Hampshire

Summary

Third grade students who are given the opportunity and the responsibility to write what they know and care about discover what published writers know: writing is choice, writing is deliberate, writing is a craft.

During prewriting, the student searches for a topic. In interviews, the children can discover that their lives are worth writing about.

Third Grader's List of Do's and Don't's for Good Topics

Do's	Don'ts
Write about something you care about	Don't write about things that are boring to you
Start off with action; with here - and - now	Don't write about something you haven't done yet
Choose just one part or aspect of your topic	Don't keep going, if it gets worse and worse
	Don't pick a topic that's too big for you to detail

The selection of a topic may be a part of revising.

In prewriting, children think about questions such as the following:

____ Am I worth listening to?
____ What do I have to say?
____ What information do I have to communicate?
____ What really happened?
____ How should I begin?
____ What questions will my reader need answered?

Writing is a craft -- a physical process of shaping and discovering meaning through language. The writer's craft is a messy one.

Methods to help children with their leads

1. Xerox each child's leads. In groups, the children share their leads with each other and discuss which leads they like best and why.

2. The class becomes an editorial board. A young writer submits his lead to editors, and they respond to it with specific questions and suggestions.

3. Children look back to leads they had written in earlier pieces of writing. Some children may decide to rewrite earlier leads.

4. Children notice leads in books they are reading. How does an author "hook" his readers?

5. Children examine their best leads. Is every word needed? Can they be more precise, more telling, more clear?

The children are lead back to their papers. They reconsider their subject, they discover their content, they see a draft as a beginning.

Consider the following revision stages and suggestions for the next step.

Revision Stages	Suggestions for the Next Step
1. One or two children don't independently reread or reconsider either their words or their mechanics. Writing is final, and for these children, it is extremely hard to put anything on paper at all.	1. These children can revise in other media. They should also be encouraged to reread what they write. Questions like "What is your favorite part?" help them begin to look back.
2. Some children reread and correct their papers. They only make small editing changes, and they erase rather than cross-out. They see each draft as a final copy.	2. By listening carefully to what this child writes, and asking honest, real questions, the writer can learn that his reader needs more information. Content revision begins as "adding-on." Usually children first add to the end of their piece, later they add on to middle sections through inserts.

3. Some children independently recopy their pieces. This is a step ahead of the child who merely corrects the original paper. Once there are two drafts, handwriting and spelling can be relegated to a later stage in the process, and the child can worry about content and language only. Also, as the child recopies he often changes the original.	3. The next step is to learn to make the first draft into a working manuscript. Write all over it. Star it. Change it. Use it.
4. Instead of viewing the 2nd draft as a copy, the child begins to see it as a second try. Usually the child will at first disregard the first draft and do the second one "from scratch."	4. Encourage the child to use the first draft. "What did you learn from it?" "What needs to be cut? saved? changed?" Look first to the larger issues: content, sequence, focus. Later look at language, word-choice, precision.

Children who write and rewrite learn to respect themselves and their work.

"A Six-Year Old's Writing Process: The First Half of First Grade" by Susan Sowers, Language Arts, October 1979.

Summary

Invented spelling used early gives the young writer independence. Children should have the responsibility to write everyday.

All writers go through a prewriting phase, and the source of writing topics is the writer's daily life. When Sarah (child discussed in the article) is restless, she is writing a story with action and a sequence of events. When she is content to remain at the writing table, she is writing a quick, simple book which lists. Both Sarah and an adult writer devise a system of escape from the piece of writing. Both may be trying to achieve distance.

Implications for Teaching First Grade Writing

1. Teachers must ask children to choose their own topics for writing from the wealth of their daily experiences. This is painless for most children early in first grade. Assigned topics are unnecessary and cheat the child of an important writing task.

2. Children need to rehearse before they write. They may need to draw, play, or talk before they write.

3. A change or elaboration in rehearsal such as drawing in profile, planning a story, or composing aloud may lead to a more sophisticated piece of writing or unexpected problems.

4. Children may not always have a clear idea of what they will write about. They may discover a better story while writing than they would have planned ahead of time. They may write to find out what their stories are.

5. When children try to solve a new problem in writing, their syntax and mechanics may not meet previous standards of correctness or logic.

6. Children need permission to explore, experiment, and make errors. Rigid standards of correctness and neatness too soon restrict children to writing about what they can spell correctly and express without a struggle. They need to know they can correct their errors when they reread their drafts or allow the teacher to edit at first.

7. Children need a writing classroom where active rehearsal is encouraged. Writers need breaks from writing to achieve distance. They will need to move in the room, talk, and draw.

"Young Writers' Preference for Non-Narrative Modes of Composition" by Susan Sowers, Writing Process Laboratory, University of New Hampshire

Summary

Consensus suggests that narrative precedes other modes of writing. In a classroom where first grade children were given control over their writing, they did not write narrative first. These children did some writing everyday. The teacher provided an audience through a sharing time for new books everyday and for publication. Conferences responded to content and focused on instruction of one skill.

The researcher suggests that there is a relationship between drawing and what was written. Figures facing forward, static and motionless, often illustrated a non-narrative. Figures in action and in profile often illustrated narrative.

Britton's rhetorical system, like Moffett's has a developmental component. Britton expects children's early writing will be expressive at first and later become transactional or poetic.

Implications

The failure of Moffett's rhetorical system to predict children's early writing preferences has three implications. Chronologic might not precede analogic in a hierarchy of abstraction. Moffett may have underestimated the difficulty of writing narrative. Analogic thinking may be rooted in prenarrative, elaborated lists. The writing process may be reformulated as listing, making references, and revising by means of tantologic thinking.

Writing process research must take into account the effcts of mode and changes in mode of writing on the writer's behavior during composing. The effects of rehearsal and revision on flexibility or rigidity in the mode of writing are still unknown.

Instructional Implications

1. First grade children are capable of writing early in the year without the assistance of topic assignments, spelling lists, or extensive supervision. Children may devise more suitable writing tasks for themselves than a teacher can assign.

2. A teacher who assigns a "story" to a first grade writer may be assigning a more difficult form than the child can write well.

3. When a child creates a new writing problem to solve by experimenting in a new mode, he or she may temporarily become restless, avoid writing, and make unexpected errors before the problem is finally solved.

4. The best preparation for writing narratives may not be filling in blanks in commercial or teacher-made materials, but rather independent writing through invented spelling in a mode the child selects.

5. The best preparation for expository writing may not be writing narratives but informal listing.

"Andrea Learns to Make Writing Hard" by Lucy M. Calkins, Research Update, Language Arts, May 1979.

Summary

When Andrea (the child discussed in the article) began, there were no decisions to be made. The subject predetermined the words. All the writer had to do was put it down.

Andrea made no content revisions. Over three months, she came to see print as unfinished and to see writing as selection. Content revision began in October. Revision means messing up the paper. Andrea had the potential to revise but had not done it. The premium she placed on neatness, combined with her understanding of writing as a one-step process, prevented the writer from actualizing this potential.

Prewriting for this student simply meant deciding what to write about. When asked to draw first, she did revise the picture. When a child tries a new approach to writing other areas suffer temporarily. When children write about something real and important to them, they care about 'getting it right' on paper.

In the process of doing the draft more than once, other changes are made unconsciously. Words have taken on a malleable, clay-like property.

Sequence of Revision

1. She revises only what is at her pencil tip, changing words which are still in process.

2. She looks back and makes small proof-reading type revisions on words which are already written.

3. She revises the beginning and end of a piece.

4. She revises middle sections of a piece.

"Who Says That Children Can't Write the First Week of School" by Mary Ellen Giacobbe, Teacher Grade One, Atkinson Academy, New Hampshire.

Summary

Children were given journals and told that they could write in them. By the third day of school, all 22 children were writing. Children had entered school ready to engage in the active process of writing. They could write even though they could not read; however, they were usually able to read what they wrote.

What was discovered?

1. Most of the children felt that they could do the activity.

2. Only two said, "I don't know how to write."

3. All of the children wrote in a left to right direction.

4. Most of the children knew initial and final consonant sounds and were able to use them in writing a word.

Because children write, they now say they can read.

The following article was published recently and needs to be included in this chapter even though it was not reviewed by workshop participants.

"The Author's Chair" by Don Graves and Jane Hansen, Language Arts, February 1983.

Summary

The study reports the observations of Graves and Hansen in a first-grade classroom in Somersworth, New Hampshire.

The children read and write every day. They are both audiences and writers. They keep all their writing in their writing folders and publish in hard cover about one in four pieces.

Each week a child is chosen as Author of the Week. The author chooses his or her own published, favorite book and the teacher makes five copies for other children to read. Whenever anyone reads a trade book to the class, the children are interested in the authors. When the teachers reads to the children, she gives background about the author. She doesn't separate the person from the work -- the same procedure used for the children's own books. Some children become known for the books they have written, for the territory they have established, and are capable of defending it under questions from the other children.

Three phases marked the children's growing understanding of the author concept: 1) Replication, 2) Transition, and 3) Sense of Option.

The author's process is invisible to the beginning first-grade child. They knew their own ability was different from that of an author. The children "play" their

way into an understanding of reading and writing. They invent and imitate versions of writing through drawing, spelling and various uses of the page. Children also share their versions of oral reading by imitating the intonation of others.

The author concept begins to become real as more and more children publish books. The children start to identify with professional authors when they become aware of the prominence of topic choice.

Children gradually show greater precision in their use of print. The child sees print as a necessary adjunct to the drawing. The child sees pictures and print as an organic whole. Gradually, more of their attention shifts to broader units of involvement in the composing process. As the child develops a sense of option, the authorship concept for self, other children and the professional become more destinctive.

Children learn that authors have the option of leaving some of the composing up to the reader. Because of the Author's Chair, children both exercise and experience the effects of audience. As children experiment, adapt, change their opinions, they become open to options during the reading and writing process.

Hypotheses About Authorship

Somehow readers who are also writers develop a sense of authorship that helps them in either composing process. The above observations lead us to the following hypotheses about the relationship between reading and writing as it develops in beginning readers.

1. Children's concept of author changes from a vague notion about some other person who writes books to the additional perception of themselves as authors to the realization that they have choices and decisions to make as authors.

2. Children's concept of authorship becomes more pronounced as their concepts of reading and writing become more differentiated.

3. Authorship concepts become more differentiated because children actively compose in both reading and writing. Composing in each of these processes consists of imitating and inventing during encoding, decoding, and the making of meaning.

4. Children change from imposing their own understandings of process and content upon authors, to realizing various authors can use process and content differently.

5. Children realize authors have options because they do the following in both the reading and writing process: exercise topic choice, revise by choice, observe different types of composing, and become exposed to variant interpretations.

6. Children who learn to exercise options become more assertive in dealing with other authors. At first an author is distant, then an author is self, finally the self-author questions all authors and assertive readers emerge.

Comments

The accusation can justifiably be made that the professional writings read and reviewed by the workshop participants are one-sided and biased. That is true; but if one is trying to search-out discussions of the young writers, very few researchers or educators are writing with the exception of those connected with Donald Graves or his philosophy. Yet much is being said to those of us interested in the young writer or those of us who teach young children.

Points to be Considered

1. We have underestimated what young children can do as far as writing is concerned.

2. Very young children can write when given the opportunity and support to do so.

3. Young writers pass through all phases of the composing process as do all writers.

4. Young children can become cognizant of audience and can revise writing in light of audience.

5. Invented spelling used by the young writer gives greater access to language.

6. The conventions of language can be learned, to a degree, through writing and direct instruction linked to the child's writing.

7. Writing at an early age may directly affect and improve reading abilities.

8. Stages of the composing process may well be divided into predictable sequences.

9. Read Donald Graves' book, Writing: Teachers and Children at Work, Heinemann Educational Books Inc., Exeter, New Hampshire.

The Composing Process

The Composing Process *

A whole piece of writing results from the selection, combination, arrangement and development of ideas in effective sentences, paragraphs, and, often, larger units of discourse.[1] The complete composing process includes prewriting drafting, revising, editing, and publishing, thus encompassing everything that goes on from the initial thinking about a topic through to publication of the completed project. The process itself is not always linear or sequential; for example, many writers make revisions as they go along; many times a writer may go back to gather more information or to discuss ideas in order to develop further a piece already in the drafting stage. For clarity, however, the discussion of the process needs to be sequential.

Not every writing activity involves the complete process. Just as adult writers may decide that a particular piece is not worth publishing, a child may not bring every piece to the publication stage. Those pieces not brought through the complete process may be thought of as exploratory writing. Such pieces may be writing to find out what one thinks about a subject, writing to develop fluency, or writing for one's personal use. However, the teacher should require that a certain number of pieces be brought through the complete process.

Prewriting

Experience

Before the students can write something worthwhile, they must be helped to realize that they already know and have experienced many things worth writing about. Experience is the first step in the writing process, and it is about their experiences that students should be asked to write. Additionally, teachers should capitalize on classroom and school-related experiences as occasions for writing. Such school-related experiences might include:

- The arrival of new books or other materials
- A classroom visitor
- Fire drills
- A teacher retiring, getting married, or leaving
- Rules for a classroom activity
- The moving away of a classmate
- An unusual happening in the classroom
- Moods created by art, music, or plays
- Making puppets
- Stories or poems read to the children
- Science experiments
- Social studies projects
- Role-playing and creative dramatics
- Field trips
- Films, film strips, slides

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[1]The definition is based on the definition of writing in "Standards for Basic Skills Writing Programs," published by the National Council of Teachers, Urbana, Illinois, 1979.

Additional experiences that teachers may suggest as sources for writing include:

- Games
- Birthdays
- Change in the neighborhood
- Moving
- Disagreements
- Arrival of new brother or sister
- Family and relatives
- Sudden weather changes
- Seasonal changes
- Dreams

Other prewriting experiences could include:

- Word games to develop vocabulary and fluency
- Sentence slotting and combining related to the coming writing activity
- Establishment of a sentence pattern or a form to be used in the coming writing activity; for example, "The important thing about _____ is that it is _____," or a limerick form.
- Teaching or reviewing a particular sub-skill important to the coming acitivity, such as a correct spelling or words needed to record a science observation.

Of course, use of imagination should be encouraged. Children can write riddles, short narratives, scripts, poems, fantasies and fables. Such writing activities could include:

- Reading examples to the class
- Oral story telling or choral reading
- Discussion of the needed elements
- Role-playing
- Creative dramatics
- Oral word play: rhyming and alliteration

Students may gather information for a composition in ways other than direct experience. Some ways may be:

- Reading about a subject that interests a particular student
- Observing an activity or place or thing and taking notes
- Interviewing a number of people about a particular topic
- Listening to an oral presentation on a topic that interests a particular student
- Viewing a TV documentary

Motivational Techniques

Sensory Experiences

Bring to class concrete items that will engage the students in a sensory experience. Have them taste lemons, feel cooked spaghetti, listen to mood music, smell spices or herbs, or see a portrait and respond orally and then in writing to the sensory experience.

Brainstorming

To avoid that "I don't know what to write" syndrome, give the class time to brainstorm. This can be done with the entire class, in small groups, or in pairs. Give them specific guidelines, have them explore all facets of a given subject. For example, you may give each small group within a class an orange and have the members record all their sensory experiences or you may give the whole class a subject such as "Winter" and record all the ideas, words and phrases that the students contribute about winter. Or you might give pairs of students a debatable topic and have them decide which side they support and list all the supporting evidence they can generate. After the students have explored their ideas and experiences, they are ready and willing to put pen to paper; they have ideas and words and experiences to share with others.

Writing About Self/Classmates

Writing about themselves and classmates in riddles, paragraphs, poems, etc. allows the students to incorporate their own experiences into their writing. The accuracy of details, the use of precise diction, and necessity of organization become important to the student, not because the teacher says so, but because the student needs these skills to communicate.

Writing with Students

When the students write, you write. Let them see your first copy with words crossed out and sentences rearranged; this will help dispel the myth that words flow out of a pen for adults and that it's only students who struggle to find the right word and the best organization. Sharing will make the whole writing process more enjoyable for them and for you.

Writing Group Stories/Poems

Writing stories or poems as a class helps everyone feel involved. On the board or on chart paper, the teacher begins with the first line or sentence and each child adds his or her ideas. This is an especially good pre-writing activity for leading the students to write their own poems or stories.

Quality vs. Quantity

Students sometimes feel that the number of words or the number of pages is the standard of excellence; that it is quantity that counts. However, it is much easier and much less frustrating for both teachers and students to work on revising, editing and publishing shorter pieces of writing. Therefore, try to keep the assignment short and direct the students' efforts to thinking, revising and perfecting. One well-written paragraph is worth more to teachers and students than a three-page essay so riddled with problems that neither the teachers nor the student knows where to start correcting and rewriting.

Writing Games

Games that encourage students to use words and discover new ways of communicating help students feel comfortable with the writing process. Some enjoyable games are:

Mad-libs - Teacher creates a story, leaving blanks and identifying the type of words needed. Students fill in the blanks. The teacher then reads the finished story to students. Then students can create their own stories leaving blanks for other students to fill in.

Dictionary Game - Teacher divides class into groups and selects words for each group that no one knows; each group writes definitions for one word and includes the dicitonary defintion as one of the choices read to the class. The winners are the groups who can trick the class into voting for the wrong definition.

Boat Game - The first student gives a word such as BOAT; the next student gives a word starting with the last letter of the word before, such as TUBA, etc. The game can be made more complex by asking students to use only names of food, or toys, or colors, etc.

Group Revision

Encouraging students to work with one another during the revising stage of the process has many advantages:

1. The writer hears what he or she has written; consequently he or she will "see" errors in logic and organization, lack of clarity, lack of specifics, etc.

2. The group will develop good listening skills and become active rather than passive listeners.

3. The group will develop appropriate social behavior, learn to criticize politely and constructivley, and learn to accept and react to criticism.

Publishing

After the students have completed their final products, it is essential that some recognition of the writer and the writing be made. Merely filing a work that a student has labored over and finally produced can be disasterous. Who wants to write for a folder?

Whatever arrangement the teacher can make for allowing students to share their work with an audience and get a response is invaluable. In this way, students' writing will transcend the bonds of an academic exercise and become a real communication.

Generating Ideas

Experience and information by themselves do not guarantee that students will be able to complete the composing process. One way to help students generate ideas for writing about their topics is brainstorming. Brainstorming may be teacher-directed and involve the whole class, or it may be student-directed in small groups. In brainstorming, students generate as many ideas as possible and are not allowed to criticize or reject any ideas. For example, if the topic is "Losing," the teacher may ask the students to give examples of losing situations and then words describing feelings when one loses. Students should be motivated to generate as many ideas and words as possible. When the possibilities have been

exhausted, the teacher can ask the students to choose from the list those items that best relate to their personal experiences. However, the students should not be confined to the list if new ideas occur to them during the composing process.

Another way to help students generate and develop ideas is through peer conferences. Even very young students can be taught to interview each other in pairs or small groups. The interviewer asks prepared questions pertaining to a personal experience of the other student. The questions should deal with who, what, where, when, how to, how many, and the like. The questions can be prepared by the teacher or generated by the class and should be specific to the particular writing task.

Peer conferences can be much less structured as students become more familiar with the technique. For example, the teacher may ask the students to jot down three to five topics that each might like to write about, and then select the one that each feels most comfortable with at a particular time. Then the students ask each other such questions as: How did you become interested in this topic? What information or experience do you have that will help you write about it. The questions can be spontaneous, stimulated by clues given in responses to previous questions.

Organizing

After ideas about the topic begin to flow, students should begin to consider the purpose, the audience, and the task for the writing. For example if a group of elementary students has just baked a batch of cookies, they might decide to describe for another class the steps involved in making the cookies. (Note that before writing, students have had the necessary experiences.) The purpose for their writing is to explain how to make the cookies, the audience is the other class, and the task would be writing a recipe or perhaps an instructional paragraph.

To illustrate the need for students' awareness of these three elements--purpose, audience, and task--let's suppose the class "room mother" assisted in the baking. Of course, a "thank you" note would be appropriate. In this case, the purpose for writing is to thank the mother, she is the audience, and the task is a letter.

Thus we can have two totally different compositions resulting from the same experience: two totally different purposes for writing, two totally different audiences, and two totally different tasks.

After clarifying for themselves the purpose, audience, and task for writing a particular piece, students need to organize their ideas before beginning the first draft. They must be taught that the achievement of their purpose for writing greatly depends on the quality of the organization of ideas which support that purpose.

Depending on their purpose, and their own level of writing sophistication, students may organize their ideas in many ways. They may list events in chronological sequence, list them in order of importance, make columns of comparison and contrasts, make diagrams of main ideas and details. Many younger children find that making a drawing before they write helps them organize their ideas. Rough outlines may be helpful, but the teacher should avoid insisting on a formal outline in the writing process.

Drafting

"Get it down. Take chances. It may be bad, but it's the only way you can do anything really good." William Faulkner said this when referring to the writing of a first draft. Students who are writing a first draft should be mainly concerned with developing the content for the particular purpose and audience. The importance of mechanics during the writing of the first draft is secondary to the development of ideas. In this stage, students should be primarily concerned about fleshing out their plans. They should be in a supportive environment in which they can feel free to consult the teacher, go back to earlier stages, look up information, but still not interrupt others whose ideas may be flowing more freely.

Of course, urging children to "get it down" only works if they are also taught that a piece must go through revisions before it is finished. To facilitate later revisions, children may be taught to make a habit of:

- Skipping lines to allow for later additions and changes.
- Circling any words they are not sure how to spell.
- Placing an asterisk before any sentence they may wish to improve later.
- Underlining words which they may wish to make more specific later or for which they may wish to find a synonym.

In the next draft, additions to content may be made, content reorganized, words made more specific, and sentences improved. Before publishing, spelling should be checked, as well as punctuation and capitalization.

Revising

In the books they read, students see literature in its final form only. As a result, children are not aware of the long, perhaps even frustrating, hours the author devoted to the work. The page with the final product does not show all the scratch-outs and pencilled-in revisions. Children do not see writing as a process; therefore, they believe that when they complete the first draft of their poem, story, or report, it is finished - it is the best that they can do. Thus, it is important that the teacher show students that writing is a process and that the core of the process is revision.

For some children, the first step in revision is to learn that it is all right to "mess up" a first draft, to learn that information can be inserted or rearranged by drawing arrows indicating where it should be, and that words may be crossed out or sentences rewritten.

To help students realize that revisions are necessary, the teacher could write a composition with the class, using the blackboard or an overhead projector. The teacher should point out the reasons for making each change and also perhaps accept suggestions from members of the class. The students have the opportunity to witness the process of revision and to realize that words do not magically flow to form a finished piece from an adult any more than they do for a student.

It is important for students to reread their own papers, even before looking at a checklist, to see what improvements they might like to make or what information they might like to add. Then, to help the children become more aware of what elements may need revision, the teacher should provide or post a first checklist.

The first checklist could include such basic considerations as:

- o Does my writing accomplish the purpose?
- o Does my writing speak to the intended audience?
- o Have I accomplished the task?
- o Have I included enough information?
- o Is my message clear?

The children can apply the checklist to their own writing or work in small groups to discuss the application of the checklist to each other's writing. Teacher-student conferences are more helpful at this stage than they are after a piece has been turned in for evaluation or for a grade. It is pointless to work on mechanics and spelling before students have clearly understood the purpose, audience and task, and the necessity of developing appropriate content.

Editing

When the students have attended to the basic consideration above, then they can address themselves to a second checklist which deals with whatever items of usage, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or sentence structure that the teacher feels most appropriate to the task and the developmental level of the students.

An effective facilitator of editing is oral reading. When a student reads his or her work aloud, many problems, previously unnoticed, come to the surface. In oral reading, students must:

- o read papers exactly as they are written
- o listen attentively to themselves for such things as natural pauses and stops, run-on sentences, omitted words, awkward structure.

Students may read their writing aloud to themselves, to a partner, or to a small group of peers. In the classroom itself, students have a readily accessible audience to whom they can express their thoughts, feelings, and imagination as they read their writing. It is the role of the audience to listen attentively and to respond with their own thoughts and ideas to the thoughts and ideas they have heard expressed in writing.

Given proper instruction, students can learn to become a good audience. They can learn to listen for <u>what</u> the writer says and <u>how</u> she or he says it. Students can hear if the writing achieves its purpose. They can hear run-ons and sentence fragments, lack of organization and poor word choice. Finally, they can also be taught how to make specific, supportive commendations of the writing. In fact, peer support and evaluation can provide strong motivation for any writer to improve a draft.

Teachers must allow time for writing as process. Analysis takes time. Improvement takes time. The teacher and the students must accept this fact and not rely on proceeding from first to final draft in a single day. As revision - improvement - is a cyclical process, a number of class periods may be needed for the final product to emerge.

Finally, students should copy the writing in final draft form. The handwriting should be neat and legible, and the students should check to see that they have not made copying errors.

Publishing

Part of the philosophy underlying the writing process is that students write to be read. The process stresses student awareness of a purpose and an audience for writing. Without publication of finished works, the writing process itself has not been completed. Without some type of publication or display of their work, students may lose the sense that their writing is a meaningful communication. Furthermore, if there is no prospect of publication, students may lose the desire to improve their writing. Following are some methods for publishing students' work:

- o Class books
- o School or grade level newspaper
- o Class literary magazine
- o School handbook
- o School anthology
- o Local newspaper
- o Children's magazines such as Highlights, Jack and Jill
- o Pen pal letters
- o Poetry booklet
- o PTA newsletter
- o Display of stories in the library
- o Taped stories
- o Written work exchanged with a class in another school
- o Written work read orally to the class, in an assembly, or to family members
- o Bulletin board display in halls or classrooms
- o Broadcasts over the PA system or in-school TV.

It is important to note that not every written piece that a writer begins will be polished enough to be published. However, a teacher should make every effort to insure that students develop some of their written work well enough to be published. The recognition and self-satisfaction that students get from having their written work seen by others is most important.

* Adopted from Sheila Schlawin's, Acting Supervisor, Bureau of English and Reading Education, writings on the composing process.

Questions from the Participants

Questions From The Participants

Often I begin workshop sessions which extend for a day or longer with a question devising activity. The first step is to divide the large group into small groups of participants, usually three to five depending upon the total number of participants. These small groups then generate three questions that they want answered by the end of the workshop period. Each group then gives the workshop leader the questions from the group and the leader records the questions on newsprint which is displayed for the workshop period. During the wrap-up of the workshop, questions are reviewed to determine if all have been addressed. Such an activity helps to focus questions, to address the concerns of participants, and to show participants that many of them have similar concerns or questions.

The following are the questions from the workshop with a response. The response is not intended to be the definitive or only answer to the question raised. (Many of the questions focused on the forthcoming fifth grade writing test. I have eliminated those because they are addressed in the section of this manuscript which focuses on the test.)

1. How do we diminish the anxiety that students have about writing?

Hopefully some of this anxiety would be eliminated if students began to write as soon as they entered school, wrote frequently, and kept at it throughout the grades. Anxiety might lessen if students saw adults write and witnessed the struggles that they have too. Discussion of writing while in process might also enable students to be less anxious about what they had to do.

2. How do we get students to improve?

We need to establish a system for peer conferences which focuses on writing. Questions and comments about a written piece help the writer to view the piece from another perspective. Students need to develop as critics of their own work. Checklists and sets of questions that the writer uses to evaluate what has been written can help to improve what is written. Skills, whether they be capitalization or organization, are best taught using students' own writing as the basis for instruction.

3. What do we do to help students get ideas on paper?

Give students many opportunities to write. Assure students that they have had experiences and have information that they can share. Let students generate their own topics for writing. The adage that one write best about what one knows about is especially true for student writers. The difficulty here may be convincing students that they do have a wealth of information to share through writing.

Maintain a non-threatening environment which is conducive to writing. Make writing an important part of students' work. Show a real interest in your student writers and what they have written.

4. How much should children write each week?

No definitive time allotment necessarily guarantees specific results. Some evidence suggests that students should write frequently. The WEDGE (Writing Everyday Generates Excellence), the replicated program in New York City, makes a strong case for students to write everyday. Donald Graves advocates that students write daily. We can conclude that students should write often. Certainly setting one period aside a month will not give students the practice they need for this task.

5. Should writing be taught as a part of other subjects or separated from them?

Certainly the English/Language Arts teachers have the major responsibility for developing students' writing ability. Yet we know that writing could be connected, in some way, with all subjects which students are required to take in school. Students should have an opportunity to write in all classes. If possible, content area teachers should become familiar with writing as process. They should know the types of writing required of the student or what the student is doing in the English/Language Arts class for writing. Content area teachers should also know ways to evaluate student writing.

6. Should students use cursive or manuscript?

Most children will begin their "writing" career by printing letters. In fact some school districts within the state do not permit cursive writing until late in the elementary years. Most students, however, will move toward cursive when they are physically able to do so. I do not think it matters what the student uses as long as it has some degree of legibility.

7. What is the difference between grammar and writing?

For a response to this question, I have borrowed from draft material of the revised New York State English Language Arts Curriculum prepared by Sheila Schlawin, Acting Supervisor, Bureau of English and Reading Education.

"Grammar may be defined either as "the study of classes of words, their inflections, and their functions and relations in the sentence and as a study of what is to be preferred and what avoided in inflection and syntax. Both aspects are important. What is to be preferred and what avoided in relation to the student's own writing is more important than grammar in the more formal aspect.

"Grammar in the sense of what is to be preferred and what avoided enters into the composing process in several ways. First, in the prewriting stage, the writer must decide on the appropriate level of diction for the purpose and audience. What is to be preferred in an editorial, for example, may differ greatly from what is to be preferred in a letter to a friend, or in a short story or skit. During the writing/drafting stage, the writer must, for clarity, use words accurately and, for style, use sentences of varied types and lengths. During revision and editing, the writer must check for aspects such as subject - verb agreement, correct pronoun reference, and complete sentences. Some exercises used as prewriting or postwriting activities, such as sentence combining, slotting words into sentences, and expanding sentences, increase the students' understanding of sentence structure at the same time that they help improve the students' writing.

"Grammar does not exist outside the sentence. Moreover, sentences rarely exist in isolation from other sentences, except in textbook and workbook exercises. The most meaningful context for studying grammar inductively is extended language-in-use (for some purpose, for some intended audience, in some situation). The student's own writing is one such excellent context."

Unfortunately most grammar instruction is divorced from the students' own writing and often is not much more than drill and practice on isolated sub-skills. Too much evidence exists to indicate that such instruction does not teach writing. In fact one study done by R. Harris in the mid 1960's suggests that such instruction takes time away from writing itself.

8. What constitutes a developmental program in writing?

The "state of the art" in writing is not far enough along to have definitive answers as to what students can or should be able to do at specific points and perhaps we should not look for that type of information about writing. If we break writing skills into too minute segments, we face the possibility of the discrete skill and objective approach which does not seem to have worked up to this point in most disciplines.

Of course you can turn to a number of resources to begin to get the answers to questions of what to teach and when to teach it. James Moffet established writing tasks which are formulated in a somewhat heirarchical outline moving from first person to the more impersonal. In this approach, Moffet suggests that the writer work with material close to him/her, beginning with diaries, letter, autobiographies. The writer then moves to third person, topical pieces. Audience and relationship to self seem to become more distant. At one end we have the diaries and letters; at the other, fact pieces which include encyclopedias and dictionaries.

The Grosse Point Public School system in its publication, A Model For The Evaluation of Student Writing, establishes levels which represent stages of development based entirely upon the child's ability to communicate in writing. At each grade level, Grade 1 through Grade 10, descriptions are given of the proficiency level of the writer. Whereas this information may be useful, it may be linked to product rather than process.

A developmental program in writing must include an understanding of what writing is; it must focus on process. Opportunities must be given to students to write for many purposes, in many forms, and for a number of audiences. Instructional attention must be given to all phases of the writing process. Writing must take place frequently, and the program must continue throughout the school program, K-12.

9. Should there be inservice for writing instruction for classroom teachers?

We know from a number of studies and surveys that English teachers have not received much training in "how" to teach written composition. With the current emphasis on this type of instruction, many teachers feel at a loss or disadvantage when given this instructional responsibility. Yet this need for inservice comes at a strange time in education for several reasons. Teaching staff are experienced people in terms of education credits, place on the salary guide, and number of years in the classroom. To take inservice courses often requires extrinsic

motivation and that motivation may be more difficult to come by at this particular point in time.

When inservice is offered, teacher needs and expectations must be addressed. Inservice must be based on recent research and theory, actively involve participants, and model exemplary instructional techniques.

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Case Studies of Student Papers

CASE STUDIES OF STUDENT PAPERS

To judge a student's writing ability, the teacher needs to examine various samples of the student's written work. To make instructional decisions based on these samples, the teacher is better able to assist the student if there are a number of samples written for different purposes and audiences and in different forms.

A holistic evaluation of the written sample yields certain information--the relation of the paper to specific standards and the relationship of the written product to others written by different students at the same time. The holistic evaluation can indicate in a broad sense whether the student is a capable writer or one who will need instructional help.

This type of evaluation, however, is just the start of the development of an instructional plan to help the student improve as a writer. If such instruction is to take place, the teacher must go back to the student's written work and examine it in detail.

Several precautions are necessary in this practice, however. The product cannot be totally divorced from the writer and need not be in most cases. In the classroom situation, the teacher needs to know the history of the student as a writer, how much the student has written, the kinds of writing done, the student's attitude toward writing, and what the student knows about the writing process. The classroom teacher would also be aided if samples of the student's writing from previous years were available.

If the student's paper is analyzed, skill-weaknesses identified, and then if instruction focuses exclusively on the skills in isolation, students' written work may not improve. We will lose sight of the whole piece of discourse and there will be a hope for skill transfer which may never occur.

In our summer workshop, we used samples of student papers written for early fieldtesting of items for the Writing Test of New York State Elementary Schools: Grade 5. Workshop participants worked in pairs and analyzed the papers. Their work was guided by the five questions on the following page, "A Case Study".

I have followed the same format with the student papers found in this section of the publication.

A Case Study

You have rated a number of papers. From the papers you have rated, select two students for an in-depth study. Analyze both of the writing samples for each student you have selected.

Respond to the following for each student.

1. What are the strengths of the paper?

2. What are the weaknesses?

3. What are the apparent differences between the two samples of writing?

4. What other information do you need about this student?

5. What could the classroom teacher do to help the student?

STUDENT A

Please, Something Go Right!

Monday the 27th of November was such an off day I thought I was dreaming! First I overslept, but to make matters worse I couldn't find my uniform or shoes! As it turned out, I had missed my bus. My Mother drove me to school, but when I walked into my class they were working on a test that I forgot to study for!! Oh great, I thought to myself, now I have 29 eyes watching me get settled. I forgot my math homework or at least I thought it was math, it could have been religion. After lunch I began to get an earache, I didn't pay much attention to it because I was going to the docter after school. On my way to the docter I sat on my mirror (7 years bad luck) and threw up on my mothers purse. The docter said my ear is infected, so know I have to take this gross pink medicine. When we got home my favorite record skipped and we are having technical difficulties

[OVER]

STUDENT A

Doll-House Girl

What do you think I do in a doll-house? Not much. How many T.V.'s and books come in doll-house size? Most of my time is spent finding my way out of bed covers. Some fun!

You might ask "How did I get to be five inches tall?". Well, I didn't think I was allergic to anything until now. I was using my friend's products when I began shrinking. From then on my life got tougher, some good things but mostly bad.

Some of the bad things were, being friends with the mice that invaded our doll-house, being washed and carried around by my dog. But worst of all being stepped on by our mailman! Can you imagine me eating turkey on Thanksgiving? Or sitting in a matchbox for a school desk? How about getting thrown out with boxes or wrappings as Christmas? Being five inches tall is not my idea of fun!

Task 1: After you get up some days, nothing seems to go right.

Write a composition of about 150 words telling about a day when nothing seems to go right.

A Case Study

Paper 1 - Student A

1. What are the strengths of the paper:

Student handles the task well.
Response is organized, with specific examples.
Student tries to bring action and humor to the piece.

2. What are the weaknesses of the paper?

Some editing needs to be done to correct punctuation, spelling, and paragraphing. This student might have done this in an instructional situation.

3. What are the apparent differences between the two samples of writing?

Question will be answered on the next page.

4. What other information do you need about this student?

What attitude does the student have toward writing?
How much writing has been done?
Are there ways that the student's writing experience could be enriched?
What types of material does the student read?

5. What could the classroom teacher do to help the student?

Give the student many and varied writing experiences.
Expand opportunities for the student to read various types of writing.
Provide opportunities for the student to help peers.

Task 2: Pretend that you are only five inches tall.

Write a composition of about 150 words telling what your life as a five-inch person is like.

1. What are the strengths of the paper?

Student handles the task well.
Paper is organized and again the student brings unity and humor to the piece.
In both compositions, this student brings unity to the writing by adding sentences which tie it all together.

2. What are the weaknesses?

Redundancy in the first few sentences detracts from the whole.
Although an attempt is made to organize the piece, the student can use some help in this area.
The student rambles and loses some focus in the piece.
Conventions of language need attention.

3. What are the apparent differences between the samples of writing?

No striking differences between the two pieces except length.
The student appeared to have more ideas about Task 2 than Task 1.

4. What other information do you need about the student?

Same as previous answer.

5. What could the classroom teacher do to help the student?

Same as previous answer.

Summary

The student does have some facility with language and probably needs much more writing experience. Additional material shows that the student did not seem to know how to use the prewriting segment. In draft copy for Task 1, the student wrote something entirely different which suggests that the finished product for Task 1 is in reality a draft copy as well. This student can improve as a writer with experience and instruction.

STUDENT B

May 18th, 1979. Was my worst day. First of all the addition wasn't up yet so in my room, the living room, and the kitchen started to leak, so Mr. & Mrs. Joice came with some buckets for us. They stayed for awhile then the cellar started to leak. Since there was no place for me to sleep. Mrs Joice asked Heaten to sleep over. She said "No." So she asked me. I said "No" But my mom made me. I did'nt want to go 'cose they had all boys. So said I'd sleep with Brian (the youngest) Because it was a school night. I rode there bus. That was the worst night.

STUDENT B

It would be offul being 5 inches tall. I would be stepped on a lot. If I tried go an ywhere. (correct) It would only be miserable. But then then then the best part I would not be able to go to school, because if I did I would be stepped on. But I would be getting small very small books. And if I get stepped a lot I would have to go to the Hospital a lot. I would get speicel clothes by my Mom a Nana, from wool to cloth. My mom would bring up all my sisters doll houses, doll playgrond, farm, preschool an school. Little beds to sleep in, eat on, and sleep on. And a matchbox for a car. I would get lots of attion. But it would be lonley! There wouldn't be anyone my size to fool around with. And for Christmas all I would get is things to sleep on, eat on, chairs cars, and a latter and a little T.V. Plus a sounds like home doll house. So as I say 5 inches is BOTTOM!

Case Study

Paper 2 - Student B

Task 1: After you get up some days, nothing seems to go right.

Write a composition of about 150 words telling about a day when nothing went right.

1. What are the strengths of the paper?

Student responds to the task.
The student organizes the piece and attempts to bring unity to it.
The student attempts to use dialogue, as limited as it is.

2. What are the weaknesses?

Not much detail is given to support the general idea of worst day.
Although the use of dialogue is a plus for the writer, the reader feels that this may be an attempt to expand the composition.
Language used is on an elementary level as is most of the sentence structure.
Errors in conventions of language--spelling, punctuation, usage.

3. What are the apparent differences between the two samples of writing?

To be answered later in the discussion.

4. What other information do you need about this student?

How much writing has the student done?
Does the student do much reading or does the student have difficulties in this area as well?
What are the student's strengths and weaknesses with oral language?

5. What could the classroom teacher do to help the student?

Give the student opportunities to do some free writing.
Provide instruction in sentence expanding and sentence combining.
Have student develop techniques to list details to support generalizations.
Work with the student to improve editing skills. Peer conferencing could help in this area.

Task 2: Pretend that you are only five inches tall.

Write a composition of about 150 words telling what you life as a five-inch person is like.

1. What are the strengths of the paper?

The student handles the topic.
An attempt has been made to organize the piece and to bring unity to it by trying the last sentence to the task.

2. What are the weaknesses?

The student mentions "good and bad" things but concentrates entirely on the bad.
Some punctuation, spelling, sentence structure problems which could probably be rectified easily through instruction.

3. What are the apparent differences between the two samples of writing?

The reader senses that the student felt more comfortable with Task I than Task II.
Skill level appears to be about the same in both papers.
No real apparent differences emerge.

4. What other information do you need about this student?

Same as previous answer.

5. What could the classroom teacher do to help the student?

Same as previous answer.

Summary

If you had all of this student's material--prewriting, draft copy--, you would know that this student is a sophisticated writer. The student included information from the prewriting segment on both tasks. In addition, specific changes were made in the second copy.

With instruction and experience, this student could prove to be a very good writer.

STUDENT C

"

One day I hit my toe on the bed and my toe became sore. The day before yesterday I fell down the step. One day I ran in to the wall, and got a big bump on my head and it became wost. I fell in a mud pill before. One day I cut my finger and it scarred. Yesterday afternoon my pencil broke, and no one had a pencil that I needed. And tusday evening the light blowed out and it was dark and no one saw nothing

STUDENT C

If I was fire-Inches I'll
live in a coal cellar. I'll
scare away the mice and
rats.
But something might happen
to me, like someone might
step on me, a dog might eat
me.
I might fall on a mouse
trap and get killed.
I might fall down a storm
drain, and a rat might eat
me.
Maybe I will fall out the
window.
Maybe I get hit around

The
End.

Case Study

Paper 3 - Student C

Task 1: After you get up some days, nothing seems to go right.

Write a composition of about 150 words telling about a day when nothing seemed to go right.

1. What are the strengths of the paper?

The student knows that the task requires information about a day nothing went right but does not select one event and expand with details.
The student has an understanding of sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation although there are some errors.

2. What are the weaknesses?

The student simply lists bad happenings rather than concentrating on an event.
The composition lacks unity.
Some spelling and punctuation errors.

3. What are the apparent differences between the samples of writing?

To be answered later in the discussion.

4. What other information do you need about the student?

How much experience has this student had in writing, particularly the complete process?
What difficulties does the student believe he has?
How does the student feel about writing?
Does the student participate orally in class?
Has the student had an opportunity to read other students' writing and share his own?

5. What could the classroom teacher do to help the student?

Concentrate some effort on activities in prewriting--brainstorming, listing, questioning, reading.
Give classroom instructional time on examining requirements of the task and then completing the task.
Illustrate how lists can be generated and then items from the list developed into prose.
Work on language convention skills as needed.

Task 2: Pretend that you are only five inches tall.

Write a composition of about 150 words telling what your life as a five-inch person is like.

1. What are the strengths of the paper?

Student attends to the task and gives many examples of what might happen.

2. What are the weaknesses?

The student never really gets beyond listing some ideas which relate to the task.
The paper lacks supporting material to expand ideas.
Some minor problems with spelling, usage, and paragraphing.

3. What are the apparent differences between the two samples?

Essentially there are no differences. In both compositions, the student tends to list but not go beyond that.

4. What other information do you need about the student?

Same as previous answer.

5. What could the classroom teacher do to help the student?

Same as previous answer. The teacher might need to have the student take one idea and expand on it.

Summary

This student needs experience in the complete composing process and needs to understand the process. Peer conferencing would benefit this student as perhaps a self-evaluation checklist might. Student may need some experience in sharing language.

Concluding Remarks

Obviously we cannot learn all we need to know from the written product alone. We need to observe students as they work through the total composing process; however, I do believe there is much to be learned from the close examination of student papers.

Instruction based on a student's paper must capitalize on the strengths that the student has. Too often instruction focuses exclusively on weaknesses. In addition, instruction cannot encompass all deficiencies at once. Concentration on a few needs at a time will prove more beneficial to the student.

Instruction which attends to needs in spelling, usage, sentence structure, organization or any other need in writing is optimal when connected to a student's own writing: Drill and practice totally divorced from the student's writing does not make a better writer.

Lesson Plans

Class Level. Early First Grade

Specific Skills.

To write sentences which have a subject, verb, and an object

To create an awareness of the different kinds of words (nouns and verbs)

To improve choice of words

Pre-Writing Experience.

Listen to and recite the rhyme "The Cow Jumped Over the Moon." Discuss the actions in the poem, particularly how silly each is. Draw pictures to illustrate the rhyme.

Writing Activity.

Have the children suggest a list of naming words (nouns) and doing words (verbs). The children will then orally create "Silly Sentences" using the two lists. Other words may also be used. The sentences will then be written on an experience chart and copied by the children. When there are more sentences than is practical to write, the sentences that the class finds the most humorous will be used.

Evaluation.

Do the students suggest correct words when making the lists?

Do students suggest complete sentences?

Follow-up Activities.

Each sentence should be illustrated.

Subsequent lessons may include describing words (adjectives and adverbs).

As the children become more independent, they may write their own sentences from the lists. These may then be shared with the class.

In those classes in which children are writing complete pieces, they may write independently and create their own nursery rhymes. These may be published with illustrations in book form.

Lesson plan submitted by
Roy Lane

Class Level. First Grade (First Half of Year)

Specific Skills.

Observation, discussion, classification,

Comparison - size, writing speaking in sentences.

Types of Writing.

Listing, Word Insertion or Picture Insertion, Personal Observation - Individual Book

Sources.

Sounds of Numbers. Bill Martin Jr., Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

"What Is Big?" (Bill Martin Series - good vehicle for pre-writing experiences)

Time Frame.

One week to finished product. (15 minutes each time)

Procedure (Pre-Writing Steps 1-4).

1. Read the story, "What Is Big?", showing illustrations.

2. Discussion - How would you describe Tommy's size when comparing him to animals around him?

3. Brainstorming - Class list concepts of biggest and smallest.

   1 list - A _____ is the biggest thing I know.
   2nd list - A _____ is the smallest thing I know.

4. Task cards - children fill in with words and pictures. Compare objects within a classification.

   If I were a _____ I would be bigger than a _____
   If I were a _____ I would be smaller than a _____

   Discussion prior to task cards - children orally compare toys, (If I were a bicycle, I would be bigger than a tricycle) furniture, children, people, objects, etc.)

5. Draft Writing - My Size Book.

   Task - Compare your size to the things you know. Use at least 5 things. (Children can use pictures or words.)

6. Editing - Student teacher conference. Teacher will type child's sentences. Child will then proofread copy.

7. Final Copy - Child will illustrate and bind books with yarn. This is to be placed in room library.

Evaluation.

Usage of the individually made books in the library.

Ability to discuss and write about size in a comparative way.

Lesson plan submitted by
M. Shaw

Class Level. 1st, 2nd, Remedial
Writing/Reading/Language Arts

Specific Skills.

The understanding that writing is communication; each idea is a sentence/a complete sentence is one idea; vocabulary experience and extension.

Types of Writing.

Whatever type develops - the kid is boss! Some will be story writing, many will be personal narrative, some may be description.

Sources/Materials.

A Fisher-Price Farm "set" with pieces, animals, etc.

Oak tag charts of farm parts (picture and name)

Small oak tag name plates for all parts

Small picture charts near "set-up" area with model sentences. "This is a farm." "A farm is lots of work." etc.

Art supplies and writing supplies

Time Frame.

An ongoing writing center which could last as long as interest remains. Skill focus could change.

Procedure.

A. Pre-writing:

Kids are allowed to play in pairs (during seat-work time) with the "farm set up." They are encouraged to place name tags near pieces, using picture chart as reference. After a "set up" is finished, the work buddies will show what they did orally to others in class. Teacher will guide so that discussion enriches vocabulary of farm parts, farm work, farm fun, etc.

Teacher will use model sentences and sentence fragments to demonstrate that a sentence is a complete idea. Then a few model sentences about the farm will be written by the group, illustrated by a child and hung near the farm "set-up" area.

B. Writing/Drafting:

After each child has had a turn at "playing" with the "set up," assignments will be made to use the area for story writing. Children can take turns making a "set up" and writing a story about it. A sign will be hung on the set up so that the assigned child has use of it until writing is finished.

C. Child will then read the story to teacher who will write it down in standard spelling. Type and bind story. Child will draw the cover picture and share book with others.

Evaluation.

Keep a log of children assigned to area. Count the complete sentences in each child's first draft and help child change fragments to complete sentences before teacher types the book. Teacher keeps written observation of the above writing conference to compare with other writings.

Teacher observation of interest generated by this center.

Lesson plan submitted by
Cynthia Mahlau

Class Level. Grade 3

Specific Skills.

Ability to distinguish change in thought in written work.

Types of Writing.

All writing except poetry.

Materials.

Blackboard

Time Frame.

This is an introductory lesson which will last one period; however, the follow-up continues until mastery is attained.

Procedure.

The basis for this lesson is the historical development of the paragraph. I trace the development of writing from the time when the writer would write "as the ox plowed." This meant that the writer would begin at the top left and begin writing from that point to the right until that line was finished. Then she/he would drop down one line and move from right to left until that line was finished. She/he would then drop down one line and move from left to the right and continue on in this fashion, till finished. By the time I get this on the board the pupils can see that chaos was produced. In time the writers developed the left to right movement that we have today.

The next development was the paragraph. The ancient Greek writers would write in the above fashion; and to indicate a change in their thought, they would put a mark "outside the writing" which in Greek is "paragraphos". This I do on the board, but confusion can still be apparent. The exact location of the mark can lead to misreading. The next development was the indent to indicate a paragraph, a new thought.

This should lay the groundwork for the reasons paragraphs are needed and what is intended by the paragraph.

Evaluation.

By observing the child's written work and reading the work together, the teacher can assess the child's progress. The child will aslo be able to determine if she/he has achieved mastery in this task. If the story is read, it can be determined when a new thought is introduced.

Lesson plan submitted by
Michael R. Makar

Class Level. Grade 4
Language Arts

Can also be Mother's/Father's/Grandparent's Day Gifts

Specific Skills.

Write a paragraph/poem to introduce and describe the unique characteristics of your Guard Rock with its name.

Types of Writing.

Student choice - suggest a poem/paragraph. Other choices are acceptable.

Sources/Materials.

Students supply rocks - small enough to fit in pants pocket.

Glue, paint, sequins, feathers, bits of lace, rick-rack, bits of materials

Time Frame.

3 days. Fourth day should be completed.

Procedure.

Introduction of idea - first day

Paint rocks and/or start writing second day. Continue on third day. As written work is completed can be corrected for final display. Can also be worked on in free time.

Show samples of paperweights based on rock figures.

Describe the characteristics of the Guard Rock - explain its loyalty, fierce disposition, tendency to do physical harm to anyone who disturbs any papers being held down.

Brainstorm to find other characteristics acceptable for a Guard Rock.

Decide what the Guard Rocks job might be -

guard papers

keep pencils on desk

keep book open

save your seat at group, etc.

Descriptions can be put on bulletin board - rocks remain in use till they tire of them.

Evaluation.

Student read and comment on each others' rocks.

Check descriptions for

1. Name
2. Word usage - vocabulary
3. Organization
4. Mechanics
5. Interesting sentences

Can also be used in an "Adopt a Rock" where past, present and future of rocks can be given in a biographical form.

Lesson plan submitted by

_____

Class Level. Grade 4

Specific Skills.

Compare and contrast, chronological order, time sequencing. (This is a good lesson coordinating writing and social studies.)

Types of Writing.

Comparison, putting factual material into a narrative.

Sources.

Dutchess County Historical Society or any floor plan of a colonial house.

Materials.

Pens, pencils, paper, floor plan of a colonial house, chalkboard or overhead.

Time Frame.

The time is very flexible depending on how the discussion part moves. Do not allow much time to elapse between comparing the floor plans.

Procedure.

Have each student draw a simple floor plan of his/her house. Label the rooms.

Begin a discussion of what activities occur in each room, listing all possibilities.

Show a diagram of a typical colonial house. Have the students look at each room. Repeat the exercise in discussing and listing activities appropriate for the time period. If an inappropriate activity is mentioned, discuss why it could not occur.

Discuss the similarities and differences in the activities. Compare life during colonial times with our life.

Have the students pretend they were living during the colonial era. They should "become" children, mothers and fathers. In each case, what would a typical day be like? Begin in the morning and end at bedtime.

Evaluation.

The lesson can be evaluated in two ways, one as a writing activity using holistic scoring and also as a social studies lesson. Check to see that the activities are appropriate for the time period (i.e., Are they playing Pac-Man?) Check for as many unique and varied colonial activities.

Lesson plan submitted by
D. Spola

Class Level. Grade 4

Two-day writing lesson used in conjunction with a science lesson on the Mount St. Helen's volcanic eruption.

Specific Skills.

Write in complete sentences a summary paragraph describing the May 18, 1980 Mt. St. Helen's volcanic eruption.

Proofreading (spelling, indentation, punctuation.)

Types of Writing.

Informational paragraph.

Sources and Materials.

Poster and picture post cards on before and after appearances of Mt. St. Helen's and subsequent destruction.

Picture book on Mt. St. Helens.

Slides on Mt. St. Helens.

Personal photographs of Mt. St. Helens.

Time Frame.

Day 1 - 40 minutes

Day 2 - 20 minutes

Procedure.

Day 1:

1. Display poster and picture post cards.
2. Show slides and discuss in detail.
3. Brainstorm (record on chalkboard) "Mt. St. Helens" words.
4. Brainstorm for specific facts to answer who? what? when? where? how? and why? (record on chalkboard)
5. Display personal photographs.
6. The students will write a short paragraph on the Mt. St. Helen's eruption. They will use a framework which includes: What happened first? What happened next? What happened last?
7. Collect papers.

Day 2:

1. Return papers.

2. Each student will read his/her paragraph to a partner. Does it "sound" right? Make changes to enhance the "sound" of the paragraph.

3. Each student will proofread his/her own paper checking for indentation, spelling, and punctuation.

4. Write final copy.

Evaluation.

The teacher will evaluate each paragraph from a holistic point of view. Criteria used:

1. Did the student include the pertinent information?

2. Was the information presented in an organized manner?

3. Did the student employ sentence variety and vivid language?

4. Were mechanical errors evident?

Lesson plan submitted by
Rita C. Sturgis

Class Level. Grade 5

Specific Skills.

Organization in development of sequence in the giving of written directions.

Type of Writing.

Directions between geographic points.

Materials.

School building and grounds surrounding or extended geographic area (if possible), maps

Time Frame.

Several hours over a period of a week (approximate).

Procedure.

Pre-writing experiences

Through general discussion develop guidelines for direction giving; refine and display in chart form.

Practice giving and following oral directions from one point to another.

Evaluate their effectiveness.

Discuss use of a map in connection with direction giving.

Drafting

Choose a particular set of geographic points and write down specific directions.

Use the directions in combination with a map either pupil prepared or commercially made depending on the choice of geographic points.

Do not divulge the final destination.

Redrafting

Have several people try following the directions to see if they effectively guide them to the correct destination.

If they are not effective, discuss with the travelers any deletions, additions, or corrections which seem necessary.

Incorporate any changes into your set of directions.

Editing

In peer groups of two or three review the written directions for proper use of mechanics and standard American language.

Publish

Write a final copy of the directions and provide a map of the involved geographic area. (commercial or pupil-made)

Display in a fashion that allows others to try following the directions (bulletin board, ditto) to see if they can arrive at the correct destination.

Evaluation.

Do the written directions effectively facilitate, without confusion and error, arrival at the correct destination on the part of the audience?

Lesson plan submitted by

_____

Class Level. Grade 5
Reading

Objective.

To have the child gain understanding of the word and universal qualities of success through exposure to biographical literature.

Specific Skills.

The child will gain practice in:

1. realizing and attending to purpose of rhetorical task
2. handling chronological order and sequencing
3. outlining
4. organization
5. seeing relationships (cause-effect) (compare-contrast)
6. writing in various modes
7. making judgments
8. using reference materials
9. editing and revising
10. subordinating ideas

Types of Writing.

1. report
2. diary
3. outline
4. story
5. opinion statement

Sources.

1. assortment of biography books
2. Who's Who
3. filmstrips of biographies
4. thesaures
5. dictionary

Time Frame.

4-5 weeks

Procedure.

1. As a class, talk about success and successful people, defining the term and listing the qualities/characteristics of successful people.

2. Read a biography, and summarize, in a report, how the qualities were demonstrated.

3. Construct in diary form, an exciting time in the person's life.

4. View several filmstrip biographies - then compare in a chart qualities/-characteristics these people have in common.

5. Hypothesize in a story how the removal of one quality, characteristic or circumstance may have changed that person's life.

6. Justify in outline form this person's success in accordance with original criteria.

Evaluation.

1. Were qualities of...and the term success clearly understood?

2. Were the tasks attended to and completed in a competent manner?

Lesson plan submitted by
Pattie Sherman

Class Level. Grade 5
Social Studies - Average mixed students

Specific Skills.

To learn an acceptable form for a business letter requesting information.

Types of Writing.

Sources of Materials.

Topic and address dependent on purpose for request.

Time Frame.

35-45 minutes (reinforcement throughout the year)

Procedure.

Explain to students the purpose of writing a letter requesting information. Through class discussion develop a list of things needed to write a letter of request.

address of sender

date letter written

name of person to whom the letter is sent

address of person to whom the letter is sent

message we want to send

appropriate "good-by"

form of our name

Also in class discussion, develop a list of things that we should try to avoid:

our address must be complete

message should be to the point

we should not loose sight of our purpose of requesting information

the letter should not be too long

Using an example of a business letter, develop the needed parts, pointing out through class discussion the reasons for these sections and the information they contain.

heading

inside address

greeting:

Body

closing,

name

As the letter approaches completion develop the concept that a letter is a personal communication between two parties. The student should try to develop pride in his/her creation.

Evaluation.

The student should be able to mail his letter and receive an appropriate response.

Lesson plan submitted by

B. H. Weaver, Jr.

Class Level. Grade 5
Social Studies

Specific Skills.

The planning and understanding of character and plot.

The completion of a plan for a tall-tale by developing and writing a character and a plot plan.

Use of ILA sentence expansion.

Write a tall-tale.

Type of Writing.

Tall-tale - narrative

Sources/Materials.

Encyclopedias

Films and filmstrips

Story collections

Time Frame.

2 days

Procedure.

A. Read a tall-tale

B. Read and discuss a character plan

C. Read and discuss a plot plan

D. Make a list of characters

E. Individual or small group compose tall-tale

F. Edit with group or teacher

G. Final

Evaluation.

See if students addressed task of writing a tall-tale incorporating the use of a character and a plot plan.

Lesson plan submitted by
Bob Holland

Class Level. Grade 5
Reading/Language/Social Studies/Science

Lesson Plan based on the book "Iceberg Hermit" by Arthur Roth (Scholastic Books)

Specific Skills.

research
summation skills
writing news articles
editing
lettering
layouts
description
organizing

Types of Writing.

headlines
news articles
feature articles
*business letters
*articles of persuasion
*editorials

Sources/Materials.

Write? Right! (BOCES)
Encyclopedias
Almanacs
ILA Manual
Atlases
Newspapers

Time Frame.

4-5 weeks

Procedure.

(Week 1)

1. Collect and display headlines and news articles from several newspapers.

2. Cut headlines apart to create new headlines. (Review of nouns, verbs)

3. Write original headlines based on:

   T.V. shows

   Movies

   School happenings

(Weeks 2-3)

1. Continue newspaper activities focusing on writing leads to accompany actual headlines and ones created in class.

2. Investigate other sections of newspapers (editorials, features, science, etc.) and practice some patterned writing activities from Write? Right! Keep them short!

3. Read and discuss in class "The Iceberg Hermit" (hide the basals and workbooks for a week or two!) Discuss:

   a. Main characters and character development

   b. plot

   c. setting

   d. theme

4. Use maps, references, etc. to learn about whaling, Aberdeen, Scotland, Eskimos, polar bears, Vikings, etc. as they appear in the story.

   a. display student art work (maps) etc. around classroom.

5. At appropriate points in story have students predict outcomes based on established evidence.

6. Have students illustrate scenes from the story. (This book is full of great descriptions that can be easily translated into art work.)

(Weeks 4-5)

1. Divide students into groups (based on ability) and "assign" news articles based on the book.

2. Review setting and time frame.

3. Generate a name and banner for the paper.

4. Choose or "elect" an editor.

5. Display finished work on newsprint with handlettered headlines, bylines, etc.

Additional Activities

*1. Write a letter to a movie studio persuading it to make a movie based on the book.

2. Choose actors you would like to see play each role.

*3. Debate whether the book is fact, fiction, or some of each.

*4. Write an editorial about whether whaling should continue today or be stopped.

5. Write about your favorite character.

*6. Give a TV style review of the story.

7. Take a field trip to a newspaper (in the ideal situation, this should be the first week!)

*Depending on class composition, these types of writing may apply to only part of the class.

Evaluation.

The possibilities are endless, but my paper isn't!

Lesson plan submitted by
Ruth Hart

Class Level. Grade 5
Social Studies

Specific Skills.

Pre-writing

- Choice and use of various forms of the media
- Reading
- Comprehension of what is read
- Interpretation

Writing

- Condensing of information
- Putting it in their own words while - summarizing the story so that it contains the who, what, when, where how or why of the event (wherever it is feasible)
- Reporting the oral communication of what they have written

Editing

- Editing in the form of questions posed by the other students, clarification of the story or event being reported, additional input by peers or teacher, and discussion within the group.
- Each day various youngsters elect to rewrite their papers and post them on the bulletin board, which is designated for Current Events throughout the year, within the classroom. Along with their papers, they add original illustrations, maps and articles from various sources (such as: Newsweek, Sports Illustrated, Omni)

Types of Writing.

Manuscript
Cursive
Typing
Calligraphy

Sources/Materials.

Newspapers
Magazines
Television
Radio

Time Frame.

20 minutes for initial activity - obviously longer for editing purposes.

Procedure.

The very first da of school, I introduce the concept of Current Events in my classroom. The children are given guidelines and a rationale for the task that will be assigned. Discussion and question/answer periods follow.

The task involves each student choosing three current events and reporting on them each morning in class. Initially, the entire task is performed in school, together, and within a week the youngsters are doing this independently, as part of their homework. They arrive in the morning with their stories, and in-school activity begins. We share, discuss, and become aware of daily current events . Revision and editing also takes place.

Since this is a daily activity each morning Tuesday through Friday, the children volunteer or may randomly be called on by the teacher. Other youngsters or the teacher may add additional information to a given event, such as: a late update, or use of a map to clarify where the story is taking place around the globe.

Every Friday, a group of youngsters volunteer to present a formal Current Events Panel on Monday morning. Each student is responsible for one of the following areas:

World Wide News Stories

Local News Stories

Sports Stories

Weather Forecast

Human Interest Stories

I would also like to add that this activity lends itself nicely to skill development in many areas of language mechanics. I also incorporate a study of the newspaper, including such things as:

Types of news stories

Types of leads

Slanting the news/Opinion

Editorials

Labeling (decks, leads, bylines, cutlines, etc.)

Evaluation.

Nine years ago I initiated this activity within my classroom with a dual purpose in mind. I used it as a warm-up for the day, giving the children the opportunity to open up within the group and feel that they have something worthwhile to share and contribute at the beginning of each day. Also, the lesson helps the children keep informed on a day-to-day basis as to what is happening around the block and around the world. I strongly feel an awareness of the 'now', and developing the ability to discuss current events with their peers and parents is an invaluable asset cognitively, and in the area of self-esteem for each child.

Lesson plan submitted by
Barbara Dolan

Lesson Plan.

Description using a "Quick Sketch" card

Grade Level. Grade 4

(This could be used for any group beyond fourth grade including adult groups)

Specific Skills.

observation

note taking

summarizing

descriptive vocabulary usage, transposing someone's notes into clear sentences.

Types of Writing.

Caption - like description

Purpose.

That a student be able to clearly communicate to another student in written form, a description of a picture.

Materials.

For each student - paper and pencil; for the teacher - two pictures which are clear and interesting, placed back to back on oaktag (or Open Court Visual Quick Sketch Cards), a large envelope or bag to hold the picture.

Time Frame.

15-24 minutes

Procedure.

Divide the class into two equal groups, facing each other. Each student must have paper and a pencil. Stand between the two groups, holding the card hidden inside the envelope.

*Say, "I have a card inside this envelope. There's a different picture on each side of the card. When I uncover the card each group will see only one side. Don't try to peek at the other group's picture. You'll see your picture for one minute. Write down, in note form, everything that's important about the picture. The students who don't see your picture will use your notes later to write about it."

Uncover the card, making sure each group sees only one side. After one minute, remove the card. After they have noted the important aspects of the picture, instruct the students to exchange papers with someone from the opposite group.

Say, "You have notes about a picture you haven't seen. Use them to write as much as you can about that picture - a full description, just as if you had seen the picture."

When they finish writing their descriptions, show both pictures. Allow several students to read their descriptions. Discuss how the pictures and descriptions differ, which notes were misleading and which were helpful. All paragraphs, even "incorrect" ones, help the students learn about clear written communication.

Suggestions and Comments.

When presenting this activity, for the first time, do an example lesson with the total class. Show only one picture and demonstrate concise, helpful note taking.

Example:	Useful Notes	Useless Notes
	A sweating jogger, wiping his face with a towel, looking exhausted	sneakers towel man jogging shorts

Discuss which set of notes provides a clearer picture for the ones who haven't seen the picture. Discuss why a listing of the components of the picture is not helpful. Be sure the students realize that the objective is to help someone "see" the picture simply by words, not to confuse someone or keep it secret. Then, use those notes to write a sample description.

Since the idea is to be sure someone else understands, the students soon discover that legible penmanship is essential. There is no oral communication, only written, so it must be easily read! For this same reason, they make a greater effort with spelling, also.

Keep the atmosphere pleasant and non-stressful. Present the activity as a game; don't plan on formal grading of their efforts. Make the final sharing of results fun as well as informative.

Since the atmosphere is positive, and because it is not required, many students will go a further step. After writing the description, they will make a decision about what the reason is behind the picture, secure in the knowledge that there is no right or wrong answer. For example, after describing the picture of an elephant walking down a city street, some suggested that he had escaped and been recaptured, some decided it was a circus parade and others thought it was an unusual pet.

This is an exercise which many students have enjoyed eagerly. Although they received no formal grades on the work, they were using and sharpening their skills and having a great time as well.

(*Verbal directions from Open Court Teacher's Guide, Level H, Language Skills)

Evaluation.

Formal evaluation is not necessary, and would decrease the value of the activity. Observe the students as they work. It is easy to notice the few who may be confused or are dutifully recording every item in the picture, and to speak to each individually. Keeping the atmosphere game-like and non-stressful means that they are eager and willing to share their efforts with each other and the teacher.

Lesson plan submitted by
Karen Jaquith

Class Level. Grade 5

Specific Skills.

1. Use of quotations
2. Creative use of conversation in oral and written form
3. Study of immigrants
4. Developing an empathy for people in new situations
5. Growth of peer to peer relationships

Types of Writing.

Conversational

Source/Materials.

1. Social Studies Text - Understanding Our Country, (Laidlaw), Chapter 19, Growth of our country and of cities, pp. 454-459.
2. English Text - Language for Daily Use, (Harcourt), pp. 112, 113, Paragraphs of Conversation and How to Write Conversation
3. At least 6 different pictures of immigrants in a variety of situations

Time Frame.

Approximately 45 minutes

Procedure.

1. After having completed a study of immigrants and reviewing the rules for written conversation, ask the students to turn to p. 358 in their social studies text and pay particular attention to the picture on that page. Discuss the picture - the teacher leading with such questions as:
   a. How do you think the old man feels standing all alone in his long coat and strange hat?
   b. What do you suppose those two young boys are talking about?
   c. See the mother with the little baby? What might be her hopes for the future of her child?
   d. How would you feel if you were there? Remember you know no English and are far, far away from your homeland.
2. Ask for volunteers to assume the identify of the various immigrant characters pictured. Present an "on the spot" dramatization.

3. Divide the class into groups of four. Give each group a picture of immigrants in some kind of situation where they have recently arrived in the U.S. Their writing assignment will be to devise some kind of conversation which might actually take place in the picture and produce the results on paper. Working in a peer to peer position, have each become a character in order to assertain a "feeling" for the assignment. The four students may work on the conversation together handing in one paper. Or, it may be an individual task. The students should be encouraged to talk freely and help each other. The teacher visits each group and assists where needed most.

Evaluation.

1. Writing may be used in any aspect of the curriculum and not just a subject taught by itself.

2. Skills taught in other subjects are reenforced through writing thus saving valuable teaching time.

3. Teaching writing in this way provides an atmosphere where the student may benefit affectively in the classroom.

Lesson plan submitted by
Elizabeth A. Tanner

Grade Level. This can be adapted for any level.

Specific Skills.

The student will receive practice in all areas of proofreading skills. This will include mechanics, sentence structure, paragraphing, and supporting detail.

Types of Writing.

The student will receive work with basic sentences and paragraphs via newspaper article format.

Sources/Materials.

The teacher will supply individual copies of the same article (2 variations) to pairs of students - 1 article per pair. Students must have paper and pen available.

Time Frame.

The exercise will take from 30-40 minutes to complete from the first directions to the collection of original materials and final products. The time frame will also vary according to the article's length.

Procedure.

The teacher will distribute identical copies of an interesting article from a newspaper. Student A, in each pair, will read the article silently. He will then copy the article, word for word, leaving out all capital letters, punctuation, and indentation spaces. While this is being done, Student B will be reviewing proofreading notes. When A completes his task, B will correct the work done by A. When done, A will go over B's corrections...pointing out and explaining errors. Reference may be made to notes or the teacher.

Evaluation.

Final evaluation will be in the distribution of a fresh copy of the same article (without capitals, etc.) to each student. They will correct one more time. The entire class will then go over the corrections and explanations with the teacher.

Lesson plan submitted by
D. Resling

Lesson Plan.

(Persuasive Discourse/Editorial)

Class Level. Grade 6
Average to Top

Specific Skills.

Recognize structure

Coherence

Know audience

Types of Writing.

Editorials/Letters to Editor/Captions

Sources/Materials.

Editorials from newspapers, magazines

Letters to the editor

Editorial cartoons

Overhead projector

Screen

Extension card

Questionnaire

Time Frame.

At least 4 to 5 days

Procedure.

1. Read an editorial, letter to an editor and an editorial cartoon.
2. Try to define what an editorial is?
   a. Ask class what they think it is?
   b. Who writes them?
   c. What does it try to do? (convince)
   d. How is it different than a newspaper article?
3. Define what a "letter to an editor" is?

   Use questions in #2 (a - d).

4. Define what an "editorial cartoon" is.

   Use questions in # 2 (a - d).

5. Put an editorial on the overhead projector.

   a. Read it.

   b. Ask class what it is about?

   c. What position is the author taking on this subject?

   d. How does he support this position? Give facts.

   e. Is it logical or is there evidence of poor reasoning? Give examples.

   f. Did the author summarize his position? (Show where)

   g. Did the author give a possible solution or present a challenge? (Show where)

   h. Do you agree or disagree with the author's opinion? Why?

   i. Give one more example that the writer could have used to support his opinion.

6. Ask class if it can pick out the 3 main parts of an editorial and what each does.

   a. Lead - acquaint reader with main idea and have facts to support this idea.

   b. Body - builds a logical case and explains the causes and/or results of this situation.

   c. Conclusion - summarizes and gives possible solutions or presents a challenge to the reader.

7. Do same with "Letter to an Editor" asking questions in #5 (a - i).

8. Show editorial cartoon.

   a. How is different/same?

   b. What is a caption?

   c. How is a caption different from other forms?

   d. Ask questions in #5 (a - i).

9. Have class read other editorials, etc. and answer questions from a questionnaire you have made using questions in #5 (a - i).

10. Compare answers with others in small groups.

11. Have them bring in other editorials, etc. from home using newspapers/-magazines.

12. Repeat step #9 (Do as often as is necessary).

Evaluation.

Have students select any topic that they wish to express an opinion on and then do one using any of the 3 forms.

a. Check to see if form is followed.

b. Check for logical reasoning.

Lesson plan submitted by
Barbara Costello

Class Level. Grade 4 - Advanced
(Second Half of the School Year)

Specific Skills.

Enlargement of vocabulary (specific verbs)

The ability to logically approach an unexpected problem

Types of Writing.

Factual

Creative

Sources/Materials.

The third anti-coloring Book

First Aid Manual (used in Health instruction in Grade 6)

Teacher experience

Time Frame.

One week

a. Pre-Writing 42 minutes

b. First draft begun in class under teacher direction

c. Individual st. ent appointment times with teacher throughout week

Procedure.

On the board have student write as many verbs as they can

1. That the word "Dragon" reminds them of under the following columns:

SIGHT	SMELL	TOUCH	HEARING	TASTE

2. Appoint a class scribe and thrcugh discussion add more.

3. Have the class add still more using Rogets Thesaurus.

4. Then, explain to the class that you are a doctor on emergency duty at the local hospital and a person, suffering from a second degree burn from the breath of a dragon, checks into emergency. The students then must

   a. Describe the nature of the wound, special considerations for treatment etc.

   b. Elicit a patient statement about the details of the happening.

Evaluation.

An informal teacher judgment about the variety and specificity of the verbs used, and, the proper usage of newly acquired vocabulary from the Pre-Writing Exercise.

Lesson plan submitted by
Janet Bertomen

Class Level. Grade 5
Language Arts

Specific Skills.

1. To read and understand a classified ad.

2. To understand and write a business letter in the correct form. (This has been done before so that will be a review.)

3. To write an answer to an ad in the paper in a business letter including all necessary information.

Types of Writing.

Business letter

Sources/Materials.

Language for Daily Use newspapers, charts, Pennysaver, magazines.

Time Frame.

4 or 5 30-minute periods.

Procedure.

1. Discuss ways people buy and sell objects they want or want to get rid of.

2. Relate personal experiences of buying and selling--ways done.

3. Stressing advertising, have class discuss what kind of information they think necessary for an ad.

4. Have materials available so they can look at ads--buying and selling--bring in ads.

6. Discuss personal experiences in answering or placing ads.

6. Discuss what information is necessary to put in an ad--why they are short and to the point.

7. Browse through ads and choose one you might want to answer.

8. Review business letter and discuss what is necessary for a clear reply.

9. Answer an ad in a business letter--if necessary make up a person and address.

10. Read your letter to someone else and discuss it--for clarity and important information, form.

11. Redraft letter--discuss with student.

12. Write final copy.

13. Have those people read their final copies to the class--who want to.

Evaluation.

Give class a choice of two ads. Have them write an answer to one in the form of a business letter indicating necessary information.

FOR SALE: 1 yr-old monkey. Has had all shots. Wonderful pet. Write Tom Green, 427 High Street, Augusta, Georgia 30901.

FOR SALE: 1972 Kawaski. Good condition, new paint, very fast. Write Ann Smith, 75 Croton Ave., Riverside, 12892.

Lesson plan submitted by

_____

Class.

Language Arts class and/or any content area (especially Reading and Social Studies) where a student can be asked to describe, analyze, and write about a real or imaginary person.

Level.

Intermediate elementary on up.

Specific Skills.

The student will write sentences which build into paragraph so the reader can understand and learn about someone.

The student will think about character traits and motives and incorporate them into writing.

These writing assignments will make use of main ideas and supporting details.

Hopefully the student will paint vivid pictures with words for the sketch.

Types of Writing.

May include the following:

Paragraph(s)

Poetry

Open-ended sentences

Cartoon captions

Letters

Diaries

Sounds/Materials.

Stories from literature (reading series), stories about famous people from Social Studies units, lessons from Science class, people in the news (current events), people from the child's personal knowledge, and people from television and the movies can be used.

I particularly like this lesson to tie in with my stories in my Reading class. That way, we can all discuss the story and plot. We can focus on the character(s) and relate the ideas into sentences. These are then assembled into a picture (sketch) using language as the medium for the message.

Time Frame.

This is dependent upon how in-depth the teacher wants to carry out this lesson. If the instruction and writing are to relate to one story from a book or other source, perhaps one day can be for story analysis, the scope of the character's personality and the effect on the plot, and the action of the story.

Another day can be set aside for pre-writing activities and brainstorming. The third day could be used for the actual writing activities. Creative activities can be incorporated into many lessons throughout the year.

Procedure.

The teacher asks the students to think about a character they all are familiar with. Santa Claus might be a good choice for younger children.

Ask the children to describe him. (This part is a good way to introduce or review adjectives.) Have the children draw a picture of the designated character in a setting which can help us to "picture" her/him in our mind.

The teacher will help the children write a paragraph or two about this person. From there, the teacher will have the students examine a story or article about a person or character. The child will then write his/her own evaluation of the person or character after thinking about the elements involved in a character sketch.

Evaluation.

The student will be evaluated regarding the ability to write impressions of this person or subject selected.

Has the student written cohesive thoughts regarding the character? Are these thoughts arranged in complete sentences and paragraphs? Has the student synthesized the material read and accurately described the character? Can the student do one or more creative activities using her/his knowledge of what a character sketch is all about? These are the questions which are used to evaluate the student regarding the aspect of writing a character sketch.

Creative Activities.

1. Have the student draw a picture of the character or person and "color" the character with descriptive words and phrases.

2. The children can make a time line of the person's life and write about events not mentioned in class. This activity is also good because it utilizes reasearch skills.

3. Have children pretend they are the character and have them fill out job applications.

4. Using math facts, have the children make up some form of income tax papers for the character.

5. Write letters of recommendation for the character or letters of opposition regarding the character.

6. The children can draw cartoons and put captions on them.

7. When quotations are studied, have the children write different forms of quotations which the character might say.

8. Have the children pretend that they are Dr. Personality Repair. Have them tell how and why they would fix and/or improve an aspect of a character's personality or life style.

9. Have the children write a paragraph or two telling why they would or would not leave their pet with the character.

10. Have the children pretend to place an ad in a newspaper for a job or position. Then have them respond to this ad by pretending to be the character.

11. Have the children plan a party and write out a guest list. Have them mention characters who would be compatible with one another. They can write a paragraph telling why.

    The children can also pretend that a quarrel or fight has occurred with two or more guests. Have the children explain why or how this happened.

12. "Wanted-Dead or Alive" posters can be made describing the characters and having pictures accompany the written description.

13. Creative stories can be written by taking a person or character and putting him or her into a different or unusual setting. For example, write about (and draw) how Betsy Ross has designed the latest costumes for the Rolling Stones.

14. Students might want to write historical fiction by pretending to take part in an important event while working or helping a real or imaginary character. For example, a person who is interested in writing might tell what it was like to be Abe Lincoln's secretary. Was he a good boss? Did he pay well? What were some problems which Lincoln faced and how did he solve them?

15. Students can reply to open-ended sentences such as:

    I would like _____ to help me with my math homework because ....

    _____ could be my brother (or sister) because we are so much alike.

    Here are some of the ways we are similar....

    I nominate _____ for the office or job of _____ because....

    Don't depend on _____ because....

    When I grow up I (want to be, don't want to be) like....

    Don't write for _____ because....

16. Creative dramatics can spring from character sketches. The children can write scripts for role playing.

Debates can be presented and reported using the techniques and style of a journalist.

One activity using drama might be a courtroom scene involving Goldilocks and three bears. Will Goldilocks be sent to jail for breaking and entering? Will she be fined and have to make restitution for the damages done?

17. Character sketches can be used as a springboard for introducing or expounding upon the aspect of point of view.

18. Poems can be written on moods, emotions, feeling, etc.

19. Diaries and journals can be written.

Lesson plan submitted by
Harriet Ackerman

TEXT MATERIALS

Review of Textbooks Within a Series

We will spend the session today reviewing a number of textbooks currently used in schools. Each member of the group should review at least one book of the series, and then as a group compile a composite report of the books in the series.

Directions:

Examine each text carefully to answer the following questions.

Single Texts:

1. How does each text handle the aspects of the writing process?

   a. Prewriting
   b. Writing (Drafting)
   c. Revision
   d. Editing

2. Do you find any attention given to purpose for writing or to audience for writing?

3. How much actual writing are students required to do? Give examples.

4. What types of writing are required of students?

5. In the text, how much attention is given to the conventions of language -- capitalization, punctuation, grammar?

6. Are there any suggestions for peer evaluation, writing folders, writing assessments, and journal writing?

7. Which skills receive the greatest attention? Does one lesson build upon the skills presented in the previous lesson?

8. What are your impressions of the text as a book to teach writing?

Review of Textbook Series

The Series

1. How early are students required to write?

2. Does the series attempt to integrate skills?

3. Does the series suggest writing in the content area?

4. Does the series focus on the writing process, the written product, or grammar (conventions of language)?

5. What skills should the students have after completing work in the series?

6. What writing experiences should the student have had by the end of the series?

7. Are the books in the series repetitious?

Review of Textbooks

A number of professionals interested in writing have viewed the materials available to teachers in the classroom for instruction in composition. "Language Arts Textbooks: A Writing Process Evaluation" by Donald Graves focuses on a review of textbooks commonly used in the elementary classroom to teach composition. Dr. Graves cites the statistic from the Educational Products Information Exchange which indicates that ninety-five percent of classroom instruction can be attributed to class materials.

Although the workshop session which reviewed classroom language texts were not meant to duplicate reported research such as that cited above, it gave workshop participants an opportunity to look at textbooks in light of the writing process. (See questionnaires in Appendix.) Most teachers, unless they serve on a textbook selection committee, rarely see textbooks other than those they use in their own classrooms. Often even though familiar with the book they use, teachers do not examine the text in light of what they know regarding the subject matter or sound pedagogical practices. Unfortunately the time allotted did not permit much more than a cursory review of the materials, and the material which follows is meant only to give some general impressions about the books we had to examine. We were limited to some extent in this review also by the fact that we did not have complete series of some prominent publishing companies, but all the books reviewed by the workshop participants were used in the participants' schools. (Series will not be identified by name for obvious reasons.)

Series I

This particular series had a copyright date of 1978, and books for grades 2, 4, 5, and 6 were reviewed by individuals and then reported by each group.

In the Grade 2 book, prewriting was handled through discussion questions, pictures to discuss, and was child-centered. "Telling" to the class was often used rather than the actual requirement to write. No provision was made for drafting, revision and editing. The final copy was the first copy. Little, if any, attention was given to purpose and audience although some attention was given to "listeners" but these "listeners" were not identified.

Students at this grade level were required to copy the story and finish it, put sentences in proper order to make a story - sentences had been provided -, and models of some forms of writing were to be used by the students to create their own. Children wrote sentences, copied, or found mistakes in given sentences and paragraphs.

In this particular book, much attention was given to the conventions of language, but listening and reading activities also received emphasis. No suggestions were found for peer evaluation, writing folders, writing assessments, or journal writing. Skills which received the greatest amount of attention were vocabulary development, verb agreement, capitalization, and punctuation.

In the Grade 4 book of the same series, prewriting was handled through listening skills, meaning, reading, speech sounds, rhyming, and discussion. The focus in writing was on mechanics - capitalization and punctuation - paragraph

writing, outlining, dialogue, narration, poetry, and reports. Minimal attention was given to revision with the main focus being proofreading. The focus for editing was grammar skills, sentence building usage skills, and words for editing. Very little attention was given to purpose or audience.

The reviewer of this particular book thought that students were required to do very little actual writing. Students had to chose the correct parts of speech, rearrange sentences, underline proper word choice, and put the peoples' thoughts in order.

Students needed to write dialogue but most of this was for correction purposes and rarely required original writing from the student. Some letter writing was required and sentence writing was called for to emphasize the acquistion of certain skills. The major emphasis seemed to be on the conventions of language. No suggestions for peer evaluation, writing folders, writing assessments, or journal writing appeared in this book.

The Grade 5 book of this series, used a reading selection with discussion questions as the main focus for prewriting. A choice of topics given in this book might be considered an impetus for writing, but there was no attention given to revision and editing. Students were required to do relatively little writing other than various types of letters. Numerous drill exercises were found and some attention was given to report writing including the book report. Chapter after chapter focused on the conventions of language.

The reviewer of this book found no suggestions for peer evaluation, writing folders, writing assessments, to journal writing. Mechanics received the most attention in this particular book.

The Grade 6 book of this series used discussion as a prewriting activity. Writing, for the most part, was to be done according to precise directions. Revision consisted of word choice activities and very little applied to editing per se. Little attention was given to purpose and audience except where applicable to specific modes of writing such as the friendly letter. Some attention was given to tone but only for oral exercises as opposed to writing.

The reviewer found that some writing was required of students such as: descriptive paragraphs, news story report, friendly letter, short notes, invitations, business letter, personal experience, writing conversation, fable, and book critique. Little preparation, however, was given to the student for writing. And in proportion to the number of "fill-in" or multiple choice assignments, little writing was required. In fact, seven of the fourteen chapters plus review sections were devoted to the conventions of language.

This particular book contained no suggestions for peer evaluation, writing folders, writing assessments, or writing journals. The reviewer felt that the book might better serve as a handbook for reference rather than as a text to teach writing.

Little will be gained by summarizing the information contained in the survey questionnaire completed by all workshop participants. Copies of these completed forms have been appended at the end of the book. What is important is the fact that even in a cursory review of texts used to teach writing in the elementary schools participants found little attention given to the writing process. Rather

they found an inordinate amount of emphasis on the product, assigning rather than teaching, and the "fill in" "underline" approach to teaching writing.

Donald Graves states "Publishing has a powerful influence on what happens in American classrooms. It has a strong grip on what actually occurs when a child is taught how to write .... The entire process area is left untouched by the texts. Neither prewriting, composing, or postcomposing activities are suggested with strength or substance in either teacher or student texts. Nor is the learner's capacity for voice development or self-critical capability developed."[1]

With the increased focus on writing as process and the instructional interest in this focus, textbooks will have to change. The workshop participants in this exercise certainly highlighted the need for such a change.

[1]Donald Graves. "Research Update: Language Arts Textbooks: A Writing Process Evaluation," Language Arts October 1977, p. 823.